

22 July 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: ACTING DIRECTOR, PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD

SUBJECT : Comments on PSB Draft Paper, D-46 of 6 July 1953.

1. This Agency is in substantial agreement with the major thesis of Section II. ANALYSIS OF PROBLEM, to wit: The Vietminh, using nationalism as a cover, can be beaten only by truly nationalist movements. Therefore, the French must undertake a new role of active liberator, or accept an ignominious defeat at the hands of Communism. We also agree that the paper as a whole reflects a keen appreciation of French psychology and a somewhat lesser understanding of the anti-colonial aspects of Indochinese nationalism. We cannot agree, however, that the strategy of applying persuasion to key leadership elements will suffice to accomplish our objective. In our opinion, the first and vital step must be the positive formulation of U.S. policy and official statement thereof to the highest level of the French Government.

2. In keeping with the thesis of D-46, the French should be told that it is U.S. policy to support a French policy calculated to enable them to pull out of Indochina while still preserving their long-range economic interests. The basis of such a policy is a guarantee of complete independence to the Associated States. Our officials must clearly state that the United States has no desire to replace the French. It therefore follows that our strategy must consistently encourage the French to take the initiative and assume the role of active liberator. We can and should provide specialists in techniques and tactics. It would run directly counter to such a policy, however, for the U.S. (officially or unofficially) to undertake unilaterally many of the tasks set forth in Section IV B of PSB D-46. The following actions fall in this category:

Page 6, paragraph c.(3): It should be noted that the French are in command and the initiative lies with them. Through liaison, we can provide specialists, technical and tactical advice at all levels desired by the French.

Page 9, paragraph b.(1), (2), (3), (6), (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), (13):

3. Note is taken of the fact that paragraph C.2, page 13 at the end of the Plan specified that all actions provided by the plan must be taken in relation to U.S. diplomatic moves. Our point is merely that statements of policy and diplomatic moves must be the heart of the Strategy Plan -- the informal approaches secondary.

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5. The following comments by paragraph are submitted for your consideration:

a. Page 1, paragraph II, 2, line 4 - eliminate the parenthetical clause -- "and we hope it will". This prejudgment weakens the paper.

b. Page 2, paragraph 4 - the meaning of the last clause of the first sentence using the word "atomism" is not clear.

c. Page 3, paragraph 3 - concur completely.

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e. Page 5, paragraph 2, (3) - change the word "of" to "among".

f. Page 6, paragraph b, (2) first sentence - Such an agreement could be negotiated through the official channels recommended in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 above, not through informal channels suggested in PSB D-46.

g. Page 6, paragraph c, (3) - As noted in paragraph 2, above, this could only be accomplished through the French. It is agreed that the Consultative Liaison Committee can contribute significantly.

h. Page 8, paragraph b, (2) - Concur with the custom-tailored approach. One suggestion is use of a convincing statement of U.S. objectives. This reinforces our agreement that a definition of policy must precede the informal approach. We question the practicality of the quid pro quo suggestions in the last sentence. This presupposed much detailed intelligence and strong influence with business interests.

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j. Pages 9-11, paragraph b. - See comment in paragraph 2, above. The French must be convinced they must initiate most of these tasks. Reference sub-paragraph (12) page 11, it is noted that the French would never concur in such an approach. They persist in blaming OMS for encouraging him in the first place.

k. Page 12, paragraph b. - This would be more difficult than it would be rewarding.

FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR, PLANS

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By

22 July 1953

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FROM: Deputy Director, Plans

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